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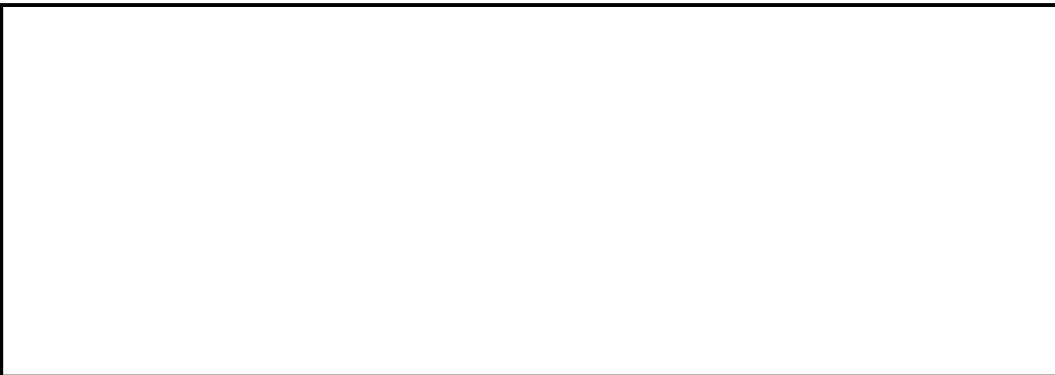
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ETHIOPIA

The military rulers in Addis Ababa may be about to go on the offensive against the rebel Eritrean Liberation Front, which last weekend initiated violence in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea Province.

On December 23, Ethiopian army authorities in Asmara broadcast a statement announcing that their "patience" had run out and that they would take "all measures necessary" to end the protracted conflict against the Eritrean guerrillas.

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Both military personnel and civilians were among the casualties from last weekend's violence. The trouble began with shooting and grenade attacks by members of the rebel organization, to which the army immediately responded in a harsh manner. Large-scale arrests were made and many civilians beaten. Such actions by the army are likely to increase the public support already enjoyed by the Front and increase disaffection among the predominantly Eritrean paramilitary police.

The tough policy enunciated by the authorities in Asmara implies a reversion to the practice followed prior to February 1974--when the army's growing involvement in politics curtailed its sweeps of the countryside against the guerrillas. The army's earlier effort was unsuccessful in defeating the Front, which has received arms, training, and support from several Arab countries. There has been only limited contact between the guerrillas and government forces since February.

The killing on November 23 of General Aman, the former head of government who was a leading advocate of conciliation with the separatists, reduced the chances of a compromise solution to the Eritrean problem. Aman's

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death seemed to increase popular support for the Front, and guerrillas openly moved armed bands into villages a few miles from Asmara. The Front controls most of the countryside, but it apparently does not have the capability to drive the army out of the province.

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SOUTH KOREA

Approximately 3,000 prisoners were given a Christmas amnesty by the South Korean government. Political prisoners were not included in the amnesty, but two Japanese citizens who were arrested earlier this year for alleged anti-Pak plotting were released.

There had been rumors that the government would release some political prisoners during the holiday season.

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The principal opposition party has recently launched an anti-Pak campaign in the major provincial cities.

The release of the two Japanese will remove a sore point in relations between Seoul and Tokyo. The action was probably prompted by statements from officials of the new Miki government indicating an interest in repairing the badly strained relations with South Korea.

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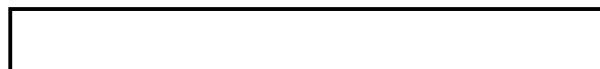
FOR THE RECORD

Denmark: Recent opinion polls suggest that Prime Minister Hartling's Moderate Liberals will double their share of the vote in the election on January 9. Even so, a strong government may not emerge from the election. Most of the Liberals' gains in the polls come at the expense of the small opposition centrist parties that have directly or indirectly supported Hartling's minority government. The parties of the left--the Social Democrats, the Communists, the Socialist People's Party, and the Left Socialists--may increase their share of the vote or, at worst, hold their own. The Liberals have already said they would consider forming a coalition with the Social Democrats. Both parties could emerge from the election equally bullish and assertive, however, which would not augur well for long-term cooperation.

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